

LIBRARY NEWS

The Manuscript Section

Pictures, buildings, artifacts and oral traditions are all part of the raw material of history, but whatever part sound recordings and the pictorial record may play in the future, up to the present the most important part has been played by the written word. So true is this indeed, that the historical period in any country is held to have begun when its inhabitants acquired the art of writing.

The distinction we now make between manuscripts and printed books would have been expressed differently by an ancient or mediaeval librarian for whom all books were of necessity manuscripts, but the distinction between a formal text, intended for public instruction or entertainment, and a private or institutional record is almost as old as writing. Documents of the latter kind make up a very important part of the holdings of an historical library.

Letters or diaries may be important because of the importance of the writer, or because a writer with no other claim to fame has been able to throw a useful light on his or her time and place. Records of association, be they cultural, sporting, commercial or whatever, document the history of the activity they promoted, the place where they flourished and the people who were active in them. Business records are particularly valuable for the researcher into economic history of the State, and the history of various industries.

I hope in future issues of this Journal to give examples from the variety of manuscript holdings already in the possession of the library. It seems appropriate to begin near our beginning, with the records of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. Those surviving in Queensland are The Chronological Register of Convicts, The Book of Trials 1835-1842, a book of miscellaneous (including agricultural) returns, and the book generally known as Spicers Diary, which was the record kept by Peter Spicer, Superintendent of Convicts, showing how the various gangs were occupied each day. Unfortunately only the volume covering the period of 7 February 1828 to 17 February 1829 is known to have survived. We also have microfilm copies of correspondence between the settlement and the Colonial Secretary's Office in Sydney, the originals of which are in the New South Wales Archives.

The following extract from Spicers Diary, being the entry for one day, may give some idea of the kind of information available from it, and something of the flavour of the times.

A daily account of Crown Prisoners employed at Moreton Bay Tuesday January 6th 1829.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Gangs</u>	<u>Employment</u>
2	Clerks	In public Offices
10	Constables & Overseers	One in Engineer's Department, 9 at Police Duties and with Working Gangs
12	Assistant Constables & Overseers	With working gangs and at Police duties
189	Mechanics & Labourers	In Engineers Department including 39 Boats' Crews

<u>No-</u>	<u>Gangs</u>	<u>Employment</u>
6	Splitters & Fencers	Five at the Limestone Hills, 1 repairing fences
190	Labourers	Employed in the Agricultural Establishment
4	At Dunwich & Pt. Danger	One Store man, 1 hut keeper, 2 Labourers
25	Camp Gang	In Government Garden
28	Road Gang	Making Drains & repairing roads
10	Stock keepers & Carters	3 with Sheep, 3 with Pigs, 1 with Cows, 1 with Goats, 1 Groom, 1 watching cattle.
20	Light Gang	3 at the Store, 1 Scourger, 1 attending sick, 1 Scavenger, 2 Watchmen, 3 at the dairy, 3 water Carriers, 5 Servants, 1 Commissariat office.
14	Barrack Establishment	3 Bakers, 3 Cooks, 5 Wardsmen, 3 Hutkeepers
136	In Hospital	6 Attendants, 130 Patients
6	In Gaol & Cells	
652	Total	
Rations issued this		Daily 493 $\frac{1}{2}$
		Weekly 24 $\frac{1}{2}$
		<hr/> 518 <hr/>

Decrease of stock 1 Boar Pig (small) died

Benjamin Bishop (Malabar 1) died on the 28th Decr supposed to have been drowned in a Water Hole, reported this day by Simon Whelan 57th Regiment N.B. Rationed to the 3rd Instant inclusive.

Photographs and the John Oxley Library

The John Oxley Library has, over the past decade, developed one of Australia's largest collections of historical photographs. These are all of Queensland historical interest and presently number more than eighty thousand. They exist in many forms. The library is increasingly developing a permanent negative storage unit. First introduced in 1977, this collection today numbers more than twelve thousand negatives, allowing less handling of original material. We also possess a collection of two hundred and fifty photograph albums, dating from the early 1860s.

Intake of pre-1940 photographs into our collection is currently averaging six thousand per year, a great deal of which are copies of material lent us by individuals, businesses and organizations. Many historical societies (e.g. Lower Burdekin, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Gayndah, Winton, Warwick) have taken advantage of our offer of a free security copying service, to ensure that negatives of valuable items are held elsewhere, and that copies of fragile photographs can be put on display, not originals. The usage of our collection is also rapidly expanding, for example, 600 individuals ordered photographs from our holdings in 1979 as compared with 466 in 1978, 279 in 1977 and 84 in 1976. Many of the photographs ordered are used in display material for various

celebrations, many others are reproduced in publications, whilst others still are ordered for research reference purposes. Photographs are no longer the cinderellas of archival collection, they have come to be seen as vital to the historiographic treatment of the period 1840 to the present. (This, of course, means that the entire history of Queensland as a separate Colony and State may be documented photographically). A photograph is truly 'worth more than a thousand words'. With the very few exceptions of art photography, we can believe what we see in a photograph. It is the one form of documentation least open to human bias, opinion or interpretation. 'The good old days' so often remembered by our great grand parents can, for instance, look frightfully bleak to a child in 1980 looking at a photograph of threadbare children playing in a main street of a country town in the 1880s. Meat hangs outside butchers' shops, horse manure litters muddy streets, and rather grubby dresses trail through the filth. Seen from the vantage point of the late twentieth century, such a photograph might immediately question the veracity of a newspaper report of the 1880s extolling the 'progress' of a town.

Readers are now using photographs to study such wide-spread topics as fencing styles, interior decoration, military uniforms, pit-sawing, and childrens games, as well as studies of changing townscapes, individual buildings and landforms. A nineteenth century photographer would have scarcely dreamed of the aspects now considered important in a single photograph; hairstyles, stirrups, water troughs, guttering, flowers in gardens, goods in shop windows. All have a potential importance as an accurate record of Queenslanders and the way they once lived.

The John Oxley Library encourages persons and societies throughout the State to allow us to copy important historical photographs. A security negative is then preserved, and, where required, a free copy is returned with the original. We hope, by so doing, to retain the image of photographs at a certain stage of deterioration, and also to insure against the loss of unique originals by fire, flood, storm or theft.

Each month in the *John Oxley Journal* we shall feature articles relating to the use and preservation of photographs for local history research. A description of recent photographic acquisitions by the John Oxley Library Journal will also be published.

Photographic Acquisitions (November/December 1979)

- . Seven photographs of sawmilling operations in the Brisbane River valley 1895-1920, copied from originals lent by Patterson's Pty. Ltd., Sherwood Road, Toowong.
- . One photograph of the Queensland Women's Cricket Team, 1933 copied from an original lent by Mrs. L. Toomey, 85 Daisy Road, Manly West.
- . Twenty photographs of the Winton district copied from originals lent by the *Winton Historical Society*.
- . Fifty photographs, 1870-1955, of the Emerald, Gindie and Springsure districts copied from originals collected and lent by the Central Highlands Regional Library Service, Emerald.
- . Twelve photographs of important nineteenth century Ipswich homes copied from originals lent by Mrs. B.D. Grimes, 60 Kathleen Street, Corinda.

- . Nine photographs, 1925-1937, of the Bollon district, copied from originals lent by Mr. W.R. McCoy, 15 Campion Avenue, Rainworth.
- . Five photographs, 1899-1910, of James Fairlie and Sons' joinery works in Maryborough, copied from originals lent by the Company.
- . Thirty-one photographs, 1910-1940, of the Ingham and Tully districts, copied from originals lent by Mr. M. McCrae, Indooroopilly.
- . Twenty-two photographs, 1892-1935, of Buderim, Alexandra Headlands and Mooloolaba, copied from originals lent by Maroochy Historical Society.

. In the month of November, the Oxley Librarian (Mr. Colin Sheehan) and the Deputy Oxley Librarian (Mr. Robert Longhurst) supervised the copying of some 1500 photographs held in the collections of the Rockhampton and Mount Morgan Historical Societies. The importance of copying some of these photographs cannot be underestimated; J.H. Lundager's shots of early mining operations at Mount Morgan (ca. 1887) were of particular concern, although severe fading of many of the prints made rephotography virtually impossible. The Rockhampton District Historical Society's collection houses many unique examples of early Queensland photography, dating into the early 1860s.

Reference Department

For more than forty years the John Oxley Library has provided a professional reference service, both to visitors to our library and to enquiries by phone and letter. We now receive by mail on the average fifty advanced reference queries per month, many from interstate and overseas. If a specific enquiry, we are able to devote five hours of a research librarian's time in a search of our source material. We cannot, however, provide all information on the history of bushrangers in Queensland'. Such general enquiries should be addressed to local public libraries.

Each month in the *John Oxley Journal* we shall list several of the reference query topics recently received. We also intend to feature an example of research work undertaken by John Oxley Library staff in each issue.

Field Work, October - December, 1979

The principal field work undertaken in the October-December period consisted of a trip to Charleville-Longreach, 24th October-1st November, and one to Townsville-Chartiers Towers, Ingham-Cairns-Milla Milla and Bowen, 3rd-17th December. On the first trip the very important donation of the records of the Central and Northern Graziers Association was collected at Longreach. These records fill a very important position for serious research into the pastoral history of Queensland and are greatly appreciated by the John Oxley Library. On this trip discussions were held with the Warrego Graziers Association Secretary and the Secretary of the Maranoa Graziers Association about similar depositions of records. An application has been made formally to the farmer and an application to copy the first minute book of the latter. The records of Weribone station which had been given to the library by Elders Station Ltd. were collected.

On the second trip the emphasis was on the inspection of photographic collections at the various centres visited. The National Trust in Charters Towers is responsible for three museums and approximate total number of photographs in these would be 200. In Charters Towers there are a number of other sources as well, the Community and Development Centre, the Civic Club and private individuals. All of these photographs may be copied by the John Oxley Library but only in situ.

The extremely important collection of photographs asked by the Historical Society of Cairns is also available to John Oxley Library for copying. In this collection there are over 1000 photographs covering the following:- Cairns, Atherton, Douglas, New Guinea, Irvinebank, Mining, Mulgrave, Aborigines, Johnstone, railways, Herberton, Mareeba, Cooktown, Eacham, Cardwell, Normanton and Torres. The Society possesses, in addition, over 600 glass plates. This entire collection is at risk in the cyclone season, and as the rooms of the Society are, in part, above a fish and chip shop, fire is also a hazard. The Society possesses a collection of manuscripts which include some of the letter books of John Moffatt of Irvinebank. The Society is very anxious to have its collections copied as an insurance against the hazards mentioned above.

The Eacham Historical Society centred at Millaa Millaa has an interesting collection of photographs, which it, also, is prepared to have copied.

In Townsville, the James Cook University was visited and the Delamothe collection inspected; also the Archives section which contains important primary source material. Mr. R. Fraley, who has an interesting collection of photographs of Townsville has offered to bring these to Brisbane for copying by the John Oxley Library in June of this year.

The Bowen Historical Society which is a very active body has an excellent historical collection housed in a modern building. The photographs which are on show are for the most part, framed, which means that the copying of this collection would take somewhat longer.

All of these photographic collections are extremely important for historiates and copying, with the copies housed in alternative sites provides the safest insurance against disaster.

A one-day trip was made in this period and it was to visit the Bells at Coochin Coochin. This resulted in the donation of an interesting series of letters written to Mr. J.T.M. Bell of Cambooh, covering the period 1874-82, and of another series to Mrs. Bell on her publication "Leader the Brigalow". "The Illustrated Coochin Grazier" (a hand-written family periodical) and three scrap books were lent to the John Oxley Library for copying.

In the next six months it is proposed that field work be undertaken in the Hughenden area.
